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In describing the rise and fall of Roman imperialism Dr. Cunningham uses economic facts to illustrate, rather than to account for, the course of historical development. This is particularly true when he summarizes the causes that led to the abandonment of the Empire of the West and the transfer of the capital to Constantinople. There were, in his opinion, "many symptoms of decay, . . . political disasters, and moral enervation, industrial stagnation and commercial ruin"; but, he continues, "when we look at the times from an economic standpoint," we shall find that "the growth of many of the evils of the time is largely accounted for by the simple fact that the Empire was inadequately supplied with money." This last is precisely Mr. Brooks Adams's point of view (though to the latter's *Law of Civilization and Decay* there is no reference in Dr. Cunningham's book); and in confining himself to this simple series of antecedents Mr. Adams displays the economic aspects of Roman civilization much more clearly than is done in the present essay.

Two points are well taken by Dr. Cunningham, and one of the two is well made. Emphasis is everywhere laid upon the effects of the environment; for, as the author says, "physical conditions are of importance not only in the rise but in the decline and fall of nations." Geography always serves to suggest, however, and never to explain the origin of economic phenomena. On the other hand, the historical application of the Aristotelian distinction between the natural and the money economy separates certain incongruous elements that have too long been confused and establishes a number of connections that have thus far been lacking.

Dr. Cunningham's book is certainly interesting and on many points suggestive. It also serves a sound pedagogical purpose, as it is admirably adapted to the use of students in economic and commercial history.

LINDLEY M. KEASBEY.

BRYN MAWR, PA.

Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire.

By SAMUEL DILL, M.A., Professor of Greek in Queen's College, Belfast. London, Macmillan & Co., 1898. — xx, 382 pp.

In this book Professor Dill has given us an admirable study of the state of Roman society in the last century of the Western Empire. The period is an obscure one and the materials scanty; but the available sources have been conscientiously and discriminatingly used, and the result is a picture which — all things considered —

is surprisingly full and vivid. One hardly knows which most to admire, the patient industry with which the author has followed the most unpromising clues, or the sympathetic and constructive imagination with which he has combined the results thus gained into a unity. Christian and pagan sources have been impartially used; and, where the evidence of letters is lacking, the codes have been made to yield their indirect but no less fruitful testimony. While the author is familiar with the best monographs which deal with his period, the entire work is based on first-hand study of the sources.

The work is divided into five books, of which the first treats of the tenacity of paganism, the second gives a series of sketches of Western society from Symmachus to Sidonius, the third sets forth the failure of administration and the ruin of the middle class as revealed by the Theodosian code, the fourth deals with the barbarian invasions, and the fifth describes the most important characteristics of the education and culture of the period. Of these the third deals most directly with those political and economic questions which fall within the special field of this review. The gradual breakdown of the imperial administration with its paralyzing centralization is briefly traced, and the effect of this centralization in the destruction of the middle class and the aggrandizement of the great proprietors is more fully discussed.

The interest of the author is not, however, primarily either political or economic, but social. "How," he asks, "were men living, and what were their thoughts and private fortunes during that period of stirring change?" (Preface, p. vii.) The answer is given in a series of admirable studies which make up the heart of the book and give it its chief originality and charm. We are introduced to Roman society, as it appeared to such men as Symmachus, Ausonius and Apollinaris Sidonius. In the picture thus drawn of the great Roman noble of the fifth century, with his pride of ancestry and nation, his love of home and family, his indifference to social duties and needs, we have the reverse of the picture given in the code. We understand, as we study the life described by Professor Dill, how such a situation could have arisen as that with which Gibbon and his successors have made us familiar. It is not that society is so much more corrupt morally than it was in the earlier centuries; indeed, the evidence gathered by our author tends rather to relieve than to deepen the darkness of the picture. But men lived wholly in the past. The artificiality of their literature sprang from

barrenness of thought, and absence of sincerity and love of truth [p. 369]. . . . When an author was praised, he was praised for having rivalled or distanced Homer or Pindar, Horace or Virgil ; he was never praised for having opened new vistas of thought or for having revealed new powers of expression in language [p. 357].

And what was true in the world of letters was true in the larger world of politics and law, of social and municipal life.

Not the least valuable part of the book is its sympathetic study of the later paganism. Much light has been shed on this subject by the work of such men as Réville and Boissier. But Professor Dill approaches the subject from a standpoint of his own ; and his book, with its painstaking study of individual character, is a useful contribution to our knowledge. We see Christian and pagan living side by side, differing in faith, yet with a certain genial toleration born of the consciousness of a common Roman descent. We see in such a story as that of Paulinus how the social indifference of the Roman aristocrat paved the way for the asceticism of the Christian recluse. We recognize the purity and loveliness of such sturdy old pagans as Symmachus. But at the same time we are made to feel that the future belonged to those earnest Christians who, "while the semi-pagan men of the world were toying with mythological fancies and feeding one another's vanity with tricks and surprises of style," were occupied with living interests and ideas (p. 369).

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

WM. ADAMS BROWN.

A Short History of the Saracens. With maps, illustrations and genealogical tables. By AMEER ALI, SYED, M.A., C.I.E. London and New York, The Macmillan Company, 1899. — 638 pp.

The author, proud of his race and its wonderful history, has wished to make the latter better known, especially in India. The work has thus been distinctly a labor of love, and we much regret that it has not been accomplished more successfully. The average reader will not be interested in the volume ; for, as the author has been unable to seize the salient points and to neglect the minor matters, most of the chapters are too thickly crowded with names, facts and dates. As a book of reference it would be admirable, if greater pains had been taken to secure accuracy, but errors are frequent : dates are wrong, especially where the author attempts to give the year of the Christian era corresponding to that of the Mohammedan calendar, old fables and exaggerated figures are repeated. The student would